

SUCCESS

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Newsletter for Lake County Workforce Development

Fall 2013

Among other services, Lake County Workforce Development funds qualified job seekers for short-term training. The goal is to help them gain the up-to-date skills necessary to compete in the current market. Read on to learn how these trainees found their careers. Visit www.lakecountyjobcenter.com for more information.

'Going Beyond' Leads to Landing a Job



Michael didn't expect that his job search would last for years when he was laid off. After all, he was a highly skilled manufacturing engineer. He found that opportunities in his niche industry were rare. After re-evaluating his skills and the job market, he decided to enter the IT (information technology) field. In 2012, he contacted Lake County Workforce Development for funding to train as a CCNP (Cisco Certified Network Professional). He completed certification within 5 months.

Michael says that his CCNP certification showed employers that he had a willingness to 'go beyond' in problem-solving. However, he still found job search to be an uphill battle since he didn't have formal IT experience yet. He haunted specialty job boards and job fairs. He networked with former co-workers and neighbors. Workforce Development staff 'pitched' his resume to prospective employers.

He eventually secured an interview with a major telecommunication company. However, the company passed him over for someone with more experience. In April, Michael secured a short-term assignment that allowed him to put his networking training into practice. When the telecommunication company called him back in June 2013, he could show them practical experience and was hired as a **Network Engineer**.

Michael says that it is necessary to be aggressive when looking for work. *"Schedule time each day for job search activity. If the phone is not ringing, you are not doing enough."*

Michael's recommended websites:

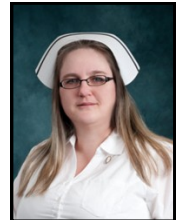
www.linkedin.com professional networking website
www.dice.com Information Technology specialty site
www.craigslist.com Michael found his current job on craigslist; beware of scams, though!
Tips that a job listing might be a scam <http://ow.ly/qmE8k>

Under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and other grants, Lake County Workforce Development can pay for qualified individuals to retrain in high-growth industries. Some recent opportunities have been in the medical and technical fields. Read more stories of some recent graduates.



When **Shalonda** lost her job as a Cashier at a fast-food restaurant, she decided to pursue training in the medical field. She started a 5-month dental assisting course in November 2012. After graduating, she used every avenue to locate job openings and participated in an interview workshop at the Job Center. She was hired full-time as a **Dental Assistant** at a local office in July 2013.

Claudia began the prerequisites for a nursing program in 2009 after losing her job as a Billing Clerk. She was accepted into the nursing program at the College of Lake County in August 2011 and completed her degree in two years. She was hired as a **Registered Nurse** in August 2013 earning \$26/hour.



Ericka had experience as a Sales Assistant but wanted a job with growth potential. In May 2012, she started a course in medical information systems. She completed certificates in Microsoft 2010 and medical office assisting. In April 2013, she was hired as an **Information Specialist** in the medical records department of a local hospital.

When **Robert** was laid off from a job with a non-profit organization, he decided to change careers altogether. Workforce Development funded him for a 6-week training in truck driving. He obtained his CDL (commercial driver's license) and started working as a **Long Haul Truck Driver** in October 2012.



Ira looked for employment for more than 9 months after he was laid off from a position as a Technical Product Manager. In a busy job market, he decided he needed to distinguish himself from other candidates. He was trained in project management (PMP), Microsoft Sharepoint and Project in early 2013. In May 2013, he was hired as a **Program Manager** at a large pharmaceutical company. He says the training benefits him each day on the job.

Letty landed a position as an **Inside Sales Representative** in August 2013. She says networking is the most powerful way to find a job.

Her top tips:

- Do not feel that you are bothering people; let go of your pride and ask for help.
- Attend workshops and interact with others.
- Blog about your job search journey; blogging releases frustration and increases the effectiveness of your writing skills.
- Remain positive, even when challenged.



Ask the WIB

All Lake County Workforce Development programs operate under the oversight and strategic guidance of the Lake County Workforce Investment Board (WIB). Recently, we asked WIB member Sam Cade to share his suggestions for how to find a job when you don't know where to start or how to begin. Here is his advice:

The most important thing for jobseekers to remember is that getting your next job is a process. The more research and preparation you put into it at the front end, the more likely you are to find the right job that will help you build your career.

Begin by **researching** industries and occupations that are growing. The best way to avoid a layoff is to be in demand! Based on that research, **prepare** yourself for your targeted career. This can mean anything from brushing up on computer skills to completing a degree or certificate program in your chosen field. Next, be sure that all of your job search **documents** are professional and clearly communicate all of the knowledge, skills and experience that you could bring to the role that you are seeking. Be sure to customize these documents for each position that you apply for. Now it is time to **find** your next job. You never know how you'll find your next opportunity, so keep your eyes and ears open. Use your networks—personal, professional, and online to help you. Finally, make sure you properly prepare for interviews and appropriately follow up to make sure you **land** the job you're after.

Keep in mind that the job search process isn't necessarily linear—you may need to come back to earlier steps and refocus. For example, if you're not getting interviews, maybe you need to rework your résumé or add to your qualifications. Remember, the Job Center has resources to help you if you get stuck. Finally, don't forget that diligence and a positive attitude are critical to a successful job search. Good luck!

RESEARCH

- Evaluate your skills
- Study labor market and economic trends
- Investigate career options
- Learn about local employers

PREPARE

- Complete your GED
- Sharpen your basic skills
- Work on your English proficiency
- Secure financial aid
- Earn a degree or certificate

DOCUMENT

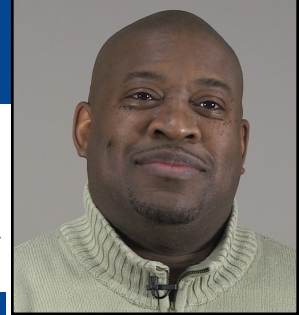
- Refresh your résumé
- Write a cover letter
- Build a professional digital image
- Complete stand-out job applications

FIND

- Build your professional network
- Target growing industries
- Uncover top jobs

LAND

- Interview like a pro
- Follow up to ensure you make a positive impression
- Negotiate the best compensation package
- Retain your new job



Sam Cade is the Human Resources Business Consultant at Siemens Corporation.

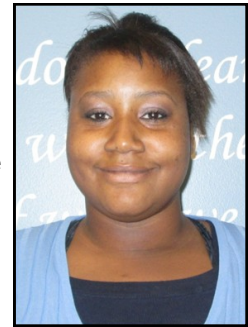
Mr. Cade has spent the past 15 years working in employee relations and development, and served over 20 years in the U.S. Military. He is an active member of the Society of Human Resources Professionals (SHRM).

www.siemens.com

Youth Training Programs

Sometimes young people need a boost as they start their careers. Lake County Workforce Development can send qualified youth ages 19 to 22 to training to help them make this critical transition. *"We focus on training in high growth areas,"* explains Program Manager Jennifer Everett. *"For this reason, quite a few of the training options are currently in the medical field."* She adds, though, that participants have their choice of many different career fields.

Marilyn formerly described herself as a 'victim'. Now, she describes herself as a successful, positive person who takes care of herself and others. Thanks to funding from Workforce Development, she recently completed training in medical assisting. In April 2013, she walked the stage of her school to receive four certificates: **GED, Certified Phlebotomy Technician, CPR and Customer Service**. She is currently a caregiver and plans to enroll in college classes to become a social worker or nurse. As a student ambassador, she speaks to incoming students to let them know that they can accomplish the same.



Elizabeth says she knew she wanted to work in the medical field but didn't know what area before enrolling in training.

Elizabeth, Megan, Peggy and Brittany were all funded for **Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)** training in early 2013. By July, all had passed the challenging Illinois certification. They all also participated in an internship to get hands on experience in the medical field.

Elizabeth and **Megan** currently balance their lives as young mothers with their new careers. They both plan to pursue degrees in registered nursing (RN).

Peggy is working in the dining room of a nursing home but will transfer internally to a nursing position soon.

Brittany applied to over 25 jobs before she was hired as a CNA at a nursing home. She has advice for other young people. *"Education is key when pursuing a career. Always try to better yourself at every opportunity given."*

Youth Training Programs



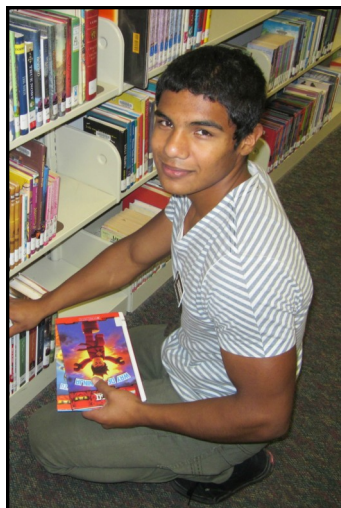
Joshua graduated from high school but dropped out of college after only one semester. He felt discouraged and hopeless until Workforce Development enrolled him in a Pharmacy Technician program in 2012. Instructors helped him put together a payment plan for his previous college classes as he started the 105 hour training through the College of Lake County.

As a part of his training, Joshua became a paid intern at a retail pharmacy. He says the internship confirmed in his mind that a pharmacy career was realistic and something that he would enjoy. He was soon hired permanently as a **Certified Pharmacy Technician** at his internship site.

"Being a Pharmacy Technician is not only an important job but a career that allows me to help people in a real way."

Summer Youth Employment Program

162 Lake County youth were employed through the **Summer Youth Employment Program** for **2013**. The county-funded program put 165 youth to work at approximately 40 work sites throughout Lake County. Summer workers were paid \$8.25 (25 hours per week) for seven-week assignments at various townships, park districts, cities, libraries and non-profit organizations in Lake County.



The Green Youth Farm was a new worksite this summer; it offered students the chance to learn various aspects of organic farming- from planting seeds, weeding, watering and harvesting the produce.

Business Services

The **Waukegan Housing Authority** has hired four Workforce Development participants during the past year. Most of those were introduced to the organization through a new work experience initiative. *"We send qualified jobseekers for training,"* explains Workforce Development Program Manager Demar Harris, *"In 2013, we developed a work experience component so that trainees could get paid work experience with local employers."*

Charles Chambers, Executive Director, of the Waukegan Housing Authority was enthusiastic about the program. He provided details about his staffing needs. Business service team members reviewed the pool of current trainees and interviewed appropriate candidates. They processed work experience agreements and administered drug and background checks. *"The work experience allowed our organization to give trainees an opportunity to learn and has opened up a future partnership where Waukegan Housing Authority will rely on Workforce Development for future employment endeavors,"* explained Charles Chambers.

Demar Harris adds that employers who take on a work experience candidate are not obligated to hire them permanently. *"In this case, the employer found the candidates to be well prepared and a great match. I'm not surprised. We work intensively with candidates from start to finish."*



Charles Chambers (left), Executive Director of the Waukegan Housing Authority, shakes hands with Workforce Development candidate Daniel who was hired permanently as a supervisor in June 2013.



Lake County Workforce Development offers businesses a myriad of services to connect them with qualified candidates. Businesses can call 847.377.3450 to speak to a business service representative.

Sharful (left) was laid off from a consulting position when the pharmaceutical company where he worked went through a merger. He received CPA (Certified Public Accountant) training through Workforce Development. He was hired as a Financial Supervisor at the Housing Authority in October 2013.

Business Services

"I was impressed with the level of responsiveness, professionalism, and how welcoming the entire team was towards me. The workspace you provided me to conduct prearranged interviews . . . assisted me in accomplishing our hiring goals. Additionally, two of the candidates we interviewed through you were offered employment."



Tarrie Rohn, Regional Vice President for AppleOne after recruitment event at the Lake County Job Center on Oct. 25, 2013

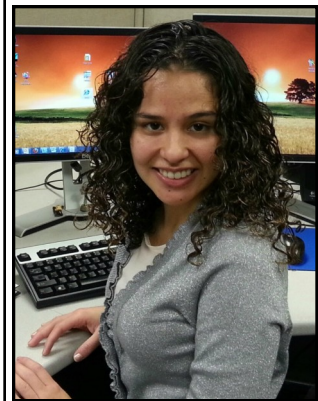
Increasingly, Job Center staff are noting a trend of job candidates who have been initially hired pending the completion of detailed onboarding materials before the candidates' start date. These might include filling out tax forms or completing video training about the company culture. (See Marian's story on the last page.)

"The Job Center provides computer access and support to individuals who need to complete pre-hire steps required by a potential employer," explains Lake County Workforce Development Director Jennifer Serino. She cautions though that nothing can acclimate a candidate quicker than an orientation at their new work site.



Freddie stopped in the Job Center in October to fax in onboarding paperwork before beginning a position in shipping and receiving. He says he appreciates the free resources available through the Job Center.

When renovations began at the county building in 2013, the Job Center agreed to provide space for assessment of candidates. Here, Jessica with Lake County Human Resources, sets up a computer to run a typing test with a job candidate.



"The faster new hires feel welcome and prepared for their jobs, the faster they will be able to successfully contribute to the firm's mission."

by Talya N. Bauer, Ph.D.

**"Onboarding New Employees:
Maximizing Success"**

<http://www.shrm.org/about/foundation/products/pages/onboardingpg.aspx>

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TRAINING • CONNECTING • DEVELOPING ILLINOIS' WORKFORCE

An equal opportunity program/ employer. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to persons with disabilities.

Job Center Helps After Layoff

Marian was hired as a **Customer Service Representative** for a contractor at Great Lakes Naval base in October 2013. She stopped at the Job Center for one more service; she used a resource room computer to



complete the onboarding documents required for new hires. As she finished her final online orientation video, she said that her new job will allow her to *'do my part as an American'*. She loves the fact that she will be working directly with military personnel since she has many family members who are veterans.

Marian was laid off from a job working for a lab equipment company as an accounting clerk in April 2013. She went directly to the Grayslake Job Center to file for unemployment insurance. There she received a packet of information about all the job search services available to her. Since the Waukegan Job Center was close to her home, she stopped by a few days later. A business service team member greeted her and showed her around the Job Center. *"I came in here blind as a bat,"* she said. *"I've never done this before. I've never applied for jobs online."*

Marian was determined to find another job quickly. *"I have to work,"* she told staff members, *"I have to make an impact not just on myself but on others."* She saw the Great Lakes job listing initially in the *Job Flash** announcements posted at the Job Center. She faxed an application but did not hear back for several weeks.

In August, Marian was called in for an interview at Great Lakes Naval Base. She waited another few weeks before receiving an employment offer via email. Her final requirement was to complete 25 training steps and forms online. Job Center staff helped her to complete the entire process that took almost a day and a half. Marian has some advice for other jobseekers. *"Come down to the Job Center and don't give up!"*

**Job Flash* is also available online at www.collegecentral.com/clcillinois. Job listings are maintained by College of Lake County, Career & Placement Services.